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AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES IN VIRGINIA, 2002

Annual wages in Virginia averaged \$37,222 in 2002, increasing 1.3 percent over the year, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Sheila Watkins, regional commissioner of the Bureau in Philadelphia, noted that Virginia's wage level was fourteenth highest among all the States and the District of Columbia, and ranked 45th in rate of increase.

Within the South Atlantic division¹, wage levels exceeded the nationwide average of \$36,764 in the District of Columbia (\$57,914), Delaware (\$39,684), and Maryland (\$39,382), as well as in Virginia. In the remaining five states, annual wages ranged from \$28,612 in West Virginia to \$35,734 in Georgia. Annual wages in the South Atlantic grew at a 2.4-percent pace in 2002 compared to 1.5 percent nationally with the District of Columbia and all states except Virginia surpassing the nationwide average. Growth in average annual wages ranged from 1.3 percent in Virginia to 3.6 percent in the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia had the third fastest rate of growth in the nation, while Delaware and Maryland ranked seventh and thirteenth, respectively.

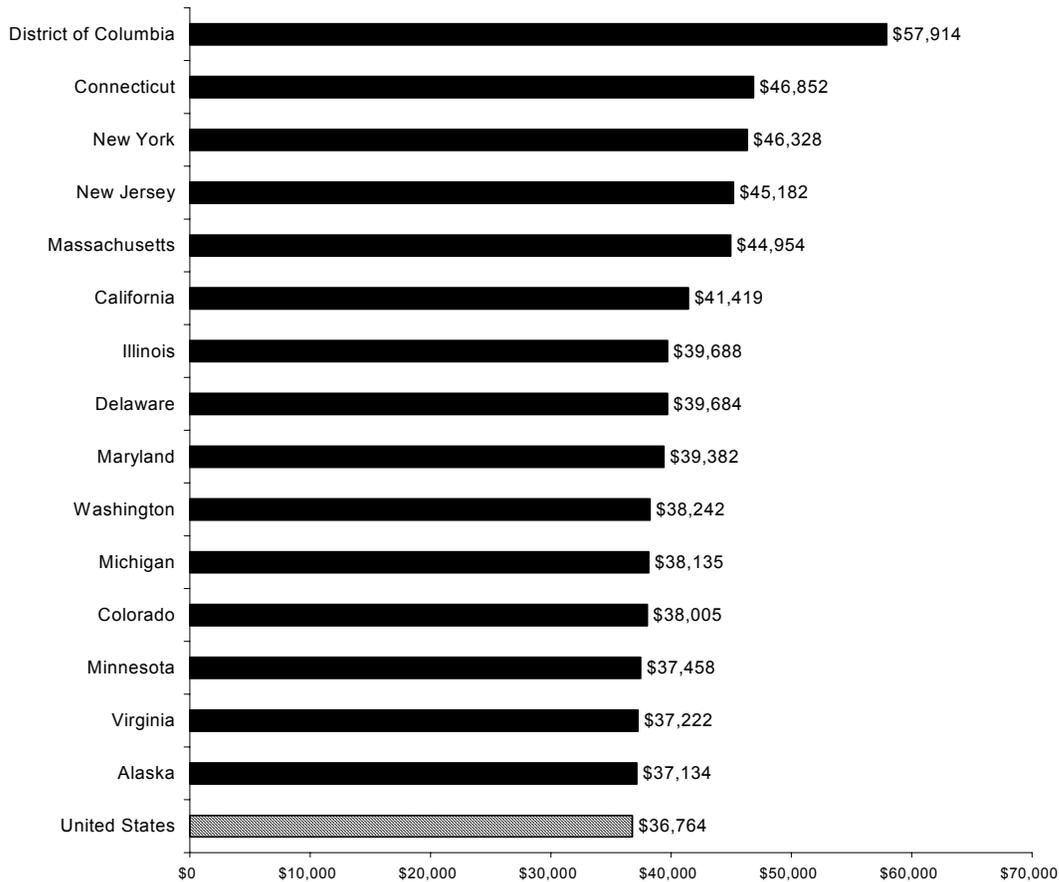
Eight of the 15 areas in the U.S. where the average wage level surpassed the national average fell in a contiguous band along the east coast stretching from Massachusetts to Virginia. The five highest wage levels nationwide were in the District of Columbia (\$57,914), Connecticut (\$46,852), New York (\$46,328), New Jersey (\$45,182), and Massachusetts (\$44,954). (See chart A.) The five states with the lowest annual wages in 2002—Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, Mississippi, and Arkansas—have posted the five lowest annual wage figures every year since 1988. Wages in those states ranged from \$26,001 to \$28,074. (See table 1.)

Four-fifths of the 50 states and the District of Columbia had percentage increases in annual wages that exceeded the 1.5 percent growth rate for the nation. Hawaii had the fastest rate of gain at 4.5 percent, followed by Nebraska (3.8 percent), and the District of Columbia and Rhode Island (3.6 percent each). Eleven other states had percentage increases of 3 percent or more. After a 5-year period without any state or jurisdiction experiencing a decrease in average annual wages, two states, New York (-0.9 percent) and Connecticut (-0.3 percent), reported a decline during 2002. Other states with low or no wage growth included Texas (0.6 percent), California, (0.2 percent), Colorado (0.1 percent), and Massachusetts (0.0 percent).

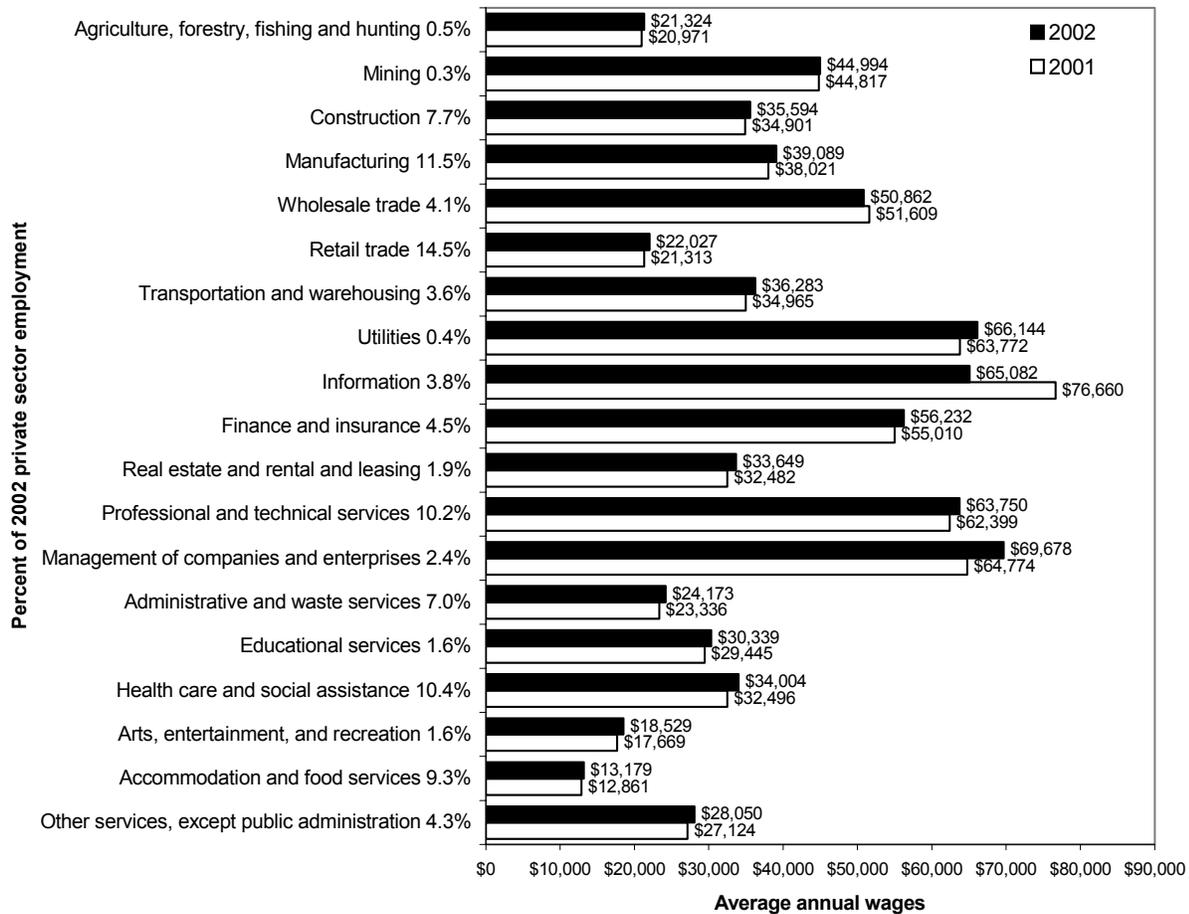
¹ The South Atlantic division referenced in this release corresponds to the Census definition and is comprised of eight states (Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the District of Columbia.

Annual wage data are compiled from reports submitted by employers subject to State and federal Unemployment Insurance (UI) laws which cover 128.2 million full- and part-time workers nationwide. Average annual wages is computed by dividing total annual payrolls of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. (See Technical Note.) Wage differences among states reflect the varying composition of employment by occupation, industry, and hours of work, as well as other factors. Similarly, over-the-year wage changes may reflect shifts in these characteristics, as well as changes in the level of average wages.

Chart A. Average annual wages for the District of Columbia and states exceeding U.S. level in 2002



Annual wages in Virginia's private sector industries, which comprised 81.8 percent of the work force, averaged \$36,750 in 2002, increasing 0.6 percent over the year. (Private industry employment excludes government workers.) Retail trade was Virginia's largest industry division, accounting for 14.5 percent of all private sector employment, followed by manufacturing with 11.5 percent. (See chart B.) Percentage changes in average wages for all published industry divisions ranged from a 15.1-percent decline in information to a 7.6-percent increase in management of companies and enterprises. (See table 2.) Management of companies and enterprises was also the highest-paid industry, averaging \$69,678. Accommodation and food services, with a large percentage of part-time workers, was the lowest paid at \$13,179. Six industries in Virginia had higher wage levels than in the United States as a whole—agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; wholesale trade; information; professional and technical services; management of companies and enterprises; and other services, except public administration. Overall, private sector wages in Virginia were close to the national level of \$36,539.

Chart B. Percent of private sector employment in Virginia by industry in 2002

Among Virginia's eight metropolitan areas², Washington, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.V. led the Commonwealth in wages averaging \$48,430 in 2002, eighth highest among the 318 metropolitan areas nationwide. (The Washington, D.C. metro area includes Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, King George, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren Counties, and Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park Cities in Virginia.) It was one of 38 areas in the United States to exceed the metropolitan average of \$38,423, and along with Wilmington-Newark, Del.-Md., Atlanta, Ga., Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, N.C., and Baltimore, Md., one of five among the 63 areas in the South Atlantic division. (See table 3.) Richmond-Petersburg recorded the second highest wage level in Virginia at \$36,751 and ranked 48th nationwide. In the remaining six metropolitan areas, annual wages ranged from \$33,328 in Charlottesville (105th highest) to \$26,116 in Danville (299th).

The rate of growth in wages from 2001 to 2002 varied among the Commonwealth's metropolitan areas; however, all eight exceeded the nationwide average for all metropolitan areas (1.4 percent). Roanoke led the Commonwealth in wage growth with 4.8 percent, while the remaining seven metropolitan areas had annual wage increases ranging from 3.2 percent in Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News to 1.8 percent in Washington.

² Nationwide there are 318 metropolitan areas. The general concept of a metropolitan area is that of a core area containing a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities that have a high degree of economic and social integration within that core. See Technical Note for criteria used in determining a metropolitan area.

Nationwide, San Jose, Calif., retained its position as the metropolitan area with the highest average annual wages (\$63,056), a position it has held since 1997. This area held this ranking despite experiencing the second-largest decline (-4.4 percent) in wages among the 14 metropolitan areas with decreases in 2002. New York, N.Y., had the second highest wage level (\$57,708), followed by San Francisco, Calif. (\$56,602); New Haven-Bridgeport-Stamford-Waterbury-Danbury, Conn. (\$51,170); and Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, N.J. (\$50,457). No other metropolitan area in the country had a wage level greater than \$50,000. Wages in these five areas ranged from 31 to 64 percent above the \$38,423 average for all metropolitan areas in the nation. Of the 318 metropolitan areas in the United States, only 38 reported levels above the average metropolitan wage.

For the thirteenth straight year, Jacksonville, N.C., had the lowest average annual wages among metropolitan areas (\$22,269). The second lowest wage level occurred in Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito, Tex. (\$22,892), followed by McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, Tex. (\$23,179), Yuma, Ariz. (\$23,429), and Myrtle Beach, S.C. (\$24,672). While the order of rankings has differed in prior years, these five metropolitan areas have had the lowest average annual wages since 1996. From 2001 to 2002, 45 metropolitan areas experienced less than average wage growth (1.4 percent). Of these, 13 areas had increases of 1.0 to 1.3 percent, and 17 metropolitan areas experienced growth of less than 1 percent; one metropolitan area had no change. Fourteen areas recorded declines in average annual wages. Seven metropolitan areas reported declines of 1 percent or less in average annual wages, six metropolitan areas reported declines of more than 1 percent but less than 5 percent, and one metropolitan area reported a decline of more than 5 percent.

Among Virginia's 12 large counties (those counties and independent cities with employment of 75,000 or more), Arlington County led the Commonwealth in wages averaging \$57,427 in 2002. Fairfax County had the second highest wage level (\$53,598), followed by Loudon County (\$47,761), Alexandria City (\$46,984), Richmond City (\$41,559), and Henrico County (\$38,668). All six of these large counties, four of which were located in the Washington metropolitan area, recorded wage levels greater than the nationwide average of \$36,764. Chesapeake City and Virginia Beach City recorded the lowest wage levels in Virginia, at \$28,761 and \$27,661, respectively. (See table 4.)

The rate of growth in wages from 2001 to 2002 varied among the Commonwealth's six large counties and six independent cities with 10 areas recording increases greater than the nationwide average of 1.5 percent. Only Loudon County (-22.1 percent) and Newport News City (-1.5 percent) fell below the national average for all counties. Alexandria City recorded the highest wage growth in the Commonwealth at 5.4 percent and ranked third nationally. The remaining areas had increases ranging from 3.8 percent each in Prince William County and Norfolk City to 1.8 percent in Fairfax County.

Data are also available for the nation's 315 largest counties. New York County, N.Y., comprised entirely of the borough of Manhattan, retained the top position among the highest-paid large counties with average annual wages of \$72,454. Santa Clara County, Calif., was second with average annual wages of \$63,056, followed by Fairfield, Conn. with \$60,712, San Francisco, Calif. with \$58,510, and Suffolk, Mass. with \$58,253. There were 201 counties with wage levels below the national average. The lowest level of average annual wages was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$22,892), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$23,179), Horry, S.C. (\$24,672), Yakima, Wash. (\$24,934), and Pasco, Fla. (\$25,602).

Manatee County, Fla., led the nation in growth in average annual wages with an increase of 7.3 percent from 2001 to 2002. Kitsap County, Wash., was second with 7.1-percent growth, followed by Alexandria City, Va. (5.4 percent), Elkhart County, Ind. (5.3 percent), Onondaga County, N.Y., (5.2 percent), and Madison County, Ala. (5.1 percent). No other large counties in the country had percentage increases of 5 percent or more. Twenty-two large counties showed declines in average annual wages from 2001 to 2002. Loudon County, Va., had the largest decrease, registering a 22.1-percent decline. Williamson County, Tex., was second with a 16.8-percent decline, followed by the counties of San Mateo, Calif. (-8.1 percent), Santa Clara, Calif. (-4.4 percent), and San Francisco, Calif. (-4.2 percent).

Quarterly Release of Covered Employment and Wages Totals by County

On February 12, 2003, BLS began the quarterly release of county totals of employment and wages by issuing data for the second quarter of 2002 on the BLS Web site. News releases on quarterly employment and wage data are available upon request from the Division of Administrative Statistics and Labor Turnover, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC 20212; telephone 202-691-6567; (<http://www.bls.gov/cew/>); (e-mail: CEWInfo@bls.gov).

Data for all states, MSAs, counties, and the nation through the second quarter of 2003 are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Background

These data are the product of a federal-state cooperative program in which State Employment Security Agencies (SESAs) prepare summaries of employment and total wages of workers covered by Unemployment Insurance legislation. The summaries are a by-product of the administration of state unemployment insurance (UI) programs that require most employers to pay quarterly taxes based on the employment and wages of workers covered by UI.

Coverage

Employment and wage data for workers covered by state UI laws and for federal civilian workers covered by the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) program are compiled from quarterly contribution reports submitted to the SESAs by employers. In addition to the quarterly contribution reports, employers who operate multiple establishments within a state complete a questionnaire, called the "Multiple Worksite Report," which provides detailed information on the location and industry of each of their establishments. Average annual wages data are derived from summaries of employment and wages submitted by states to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. These reports are based on place of employment rather than place of residence.

UI and UCFE coverage is broad and basically comparable from state to state. In 2002, UI and UCFE programs covered workers in 128.2 million jobs. Covered workers received \$4.713 trillion in wages, representing 94.3 percent of the wage and salary component of personal income and 45.1 percent of the gross domestic product.

Major exclusions from UI coverage include self-employed workers, most agricultural workers on small farms, all members of the Armed Forces, elected officials in most states, most employees of railroads, some domestic workers, most student workers at schools, and employees of certain small nonprofit organizations.

Concepts and methodology

Average annual wages were computed by dividing total annual wages of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. In addition to salaries, average annual wages data include bonuses, the cash value of meals and lodging when supplied, tips and other gratuities, and, in some states, employer contributions to certain deferred compensation plans such as 401(k) plans, and stock options. Monthly employment is based on the number of workers who worked during or received wages for the pay period including the 12th of the month. With few exceptions, all employees of covered firms are reported, including production and sales workers, corporation officials, executives, supervisory personnel, and clerical workers. Workers on paid vacations and part-time workers also are included.

Average annual wages are affected by the ratio of full-time to part-time workers as well as the number of individuals in high-paying and low-paying occupations. When comparing average annual wage levels between industries and/or states, these factors should be taken into consideration. Annual wage data only approximate annual earnings because an individual may not be employed by the same employer all year or may work for more than one employer. Also, year-to-year changes in average annual wages can result from a change in the proportion of employment in high- and low-wage jobs, as well as from changes in the level of average annual wages.

In order to insure the highest possible quality of data, SESAs verify with employers and update, if necessary, the industry, location, and ownership classification of all establishments on a 3-year cycle. Changes in establishment classification codes resulting from the verification process are introduced with the data reported for the first quarter of the year. Changes resulting from improved employer reporting also are introduced in the first quarter. For these reasons, some data, especially at more detailed industry levels, may not be strictly comparable with earlier years.

A few covered employers provided insufficient information on the nature of their businesses to enable the SESA to assign a specific NAICS code. The establishments of these employers therefore could not be classified by industry sector. The wages for these nonclassifiable establishments, along with data for the agricultural division, are not shown separately, but are included in the averages for state and national totals.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines metropolitan areas for use in federal statistical activities and updates these definitions as needed each summer—data in this release use criteria established in definitions issued June 30, 1999 (OMB Bulletin No. 99-04). The 318 metropolitan areas in the United States are a compilation of a set of areas classified as Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSAs) and Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSAs). Generally speaking, an MSA consists of one or more counties and meets specified size criteria—either it contains a city of at least 50,000 inhabitants, or it contains an urbanized area of at least 50,000 inhabitants, and has a total population of at least 100,000 (75,000 in New England). A CMSA is a metropolitan area that has a population of at least 1 million and has been divided into two or more PMSAs. The CMSA comprises the same geographic area as its constituent PMSAs which are loosely defined as free-standing areas that have a population of at least 100,000.

County definitions are assigned according to Federal Information Processing Standards Publications (FIPS PUBS) as issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, after approval by the Secretary of Commerce pursuant to Section 5131 of the Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996 and the Computer Security Act of 1987, Public Law 104-106. Areas shown as counties include areas designated as independent cities in some jurisdictions, and, in Alaska, those designated as census areas where counties have not been created.

Additional statistics and other information

Additional average annual wage data is available on the BLS Internet site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/home.htm>. Also, beginning in October 2002, quarterly data are available for selected Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages series. Data can be accessed in several ways, including *Selective Access*, which allows quick access to particular items, and the special request FTP service, which allows access to extensive collection of flat text files. The Philadelphia Information Office can provide assistance accessing these files by calling (215) 597-3282.

This news release, along with other BLS statistics and information, is available via the Internet at the BLS World Wide Web site <http://www.bls.gov/ro3/home.htm>.

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2002* is available for sale from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Publications Sales Center, P.O. Box 2145, Chicago, Illinois 60690. Telephone orders using a credit card (MasterCard, VISA, Discover/NOVUS) or Government Printing Office Deposit Account are accepted at (312)353-1880 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. CT. The bulletin is now available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn02.htm>.

News releases on quarterly measures of gross job flows also are available upon request from the Division of Administrative Statistics and Labor Turnover (Business Employment Dynamics), telephone 202-691-6467; (<http://www.bls.gov/bdm/>); (email: BDMInfo@bls.gov).

Table 1. State average annual wages for 2001 and 2002 and percent change in wages for all covered workers¹

	Average annual wages		Percent change, 2001-2002
	2001	2002	
UNITED STATES ²	\$36,219	\$36,764	1.5
South Atlantic Region³	34,090	34,896	2.4
Alabama	30,102	31,163	3.5
Alaska	36,170	37,134	2.7
Arizona	33,411	34,036	1.9
Arkansas	27,260	28,074	3.0
California	41,327	41,419	0.2
Colorado	37,952	38,005	0.1
Connecticut	46,993	46,852	-0.3
Delaware.....	38,427	39,684	3.3
District of	55,909	57,914	3.6
Florida	31,553	32,426	2.8
Georgia.....	35,136	35,734	1.7
Hawaii	31,253	32,671	4.5
Idaho	27,768	28,163	1.4
Illinois	39,083	39,688	1.5
Indiana	31,779	32,603	2.6
Iowa	28,837	29,668	2.9
Kansas	30,153	30,825	2.2
Kentucky	30,021	30,904	2.9
Louisiana	29,131	30,115	3.4
Maine	28,815	29,736	3.2
Maryland.....	38,253	39,382	3.0
Massachusetts	44,975	44,954	0.0
Michigan	37,391	38,135	2.0
Minnesota	36,587	37,458	2.4
Mississippi	25,923	26,665	2.9
Missouri	32,421	33,118	2.1
Montana	25,195	26,001	3.2
Nebraska	28,377	29,448	3.8
Nevada	33,121	33,993	2.6
New Hampshire	35,481	36,176	2.0
New Jersey	44,320	45,182	1.9
New Mexico	28,702	29,431	2.5
New York	46,727	46,328	-0.9
North Carolina.....	32,024	32,689	2.1
North Dakota	25,707	26,550	3.3
Ohio	33,283	34,214	2.8
Oklahoma	28,016	28,654	2.3
Oregon	33,204	33,684	1.4
Pennsylvania.....	34,978	35,808	2.4
Rhode Island	33,603	34,810	3.6
South Carolina.....	29,255	30,003	2.6
South Dakota	25,601	26,360	3.0
Tennessee	31,520	32,531	3.2
Texas	36,045	36,248	0.6
Utah	30,077	30,585	1.7
Vermont	30,238	31,041	2.7
Virginia.....	36,733	37,222	1.3
Washington	37,459	38,242	2.1
West Virginia.....	27,981	28,612	2.3
Wisconsin	31,540	32,464	2.9
Wyoming	28,043	28,975	3.3

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

³ The eight states and the District of Columbia comprising the South Atlantic division are in bold-face type.

Table 2. State and industry average annual wages in the U.S. and Virginia for 2001 and 2002 and percent change in wages for private industry workers¹

State and industry	Average annual wages ²		Percent change, 2001-2002
	2001	2002	
United States			
Total Private ³	\$36,157	\$36,539	1.1
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.....	20,188	20,890	3.5
Mining	59,686	60,392	1.2
Construction	38,412	39,027	1.6
Manufacturing	42,969	44,097	2.6
Wholesale	48,791	49,241	0.9
Retail trade.....	22,667	23,232	2.5
Transportation and warehousing.....	36,189	36,823	1.8
Utilities.....	65,561	67,374	2.8
Information.....	57,288	56,103	-2.1
Finance and insurance.....	63,687	62,762	-1.5
Real estate and rental and leasing	32,871	33,924	3.2
Professional and technical services.	58,755	58,672	-0.1
Management of companies and enterprises.....	68,965	69,277	0.5
Administrative and waste services...	24,443	25,276	3.4
Educational services.....	32,066	33,163	3.4
Health care and social assistance.	32,813	34,043	3.7
Arts, entertainment, and recreation..	25,344	26,159	3.2
Accommodation and food services...	13,674	13,946	2.0
Other services, except public administration.....	23,220	23,784	2.4
Virginia			
Total Private ⁴	36,525	36,750	0.6
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.....	20,971	21,324	1.7
Mining	44,817	44,994	0.4
Construction	34,901	35,594	2.0
Manufacturing	38,021	39,089	2.8
Wholesale trade.....	51,609	50,862	-1.4
Retail trade.....	21,313	22,027	3.4
Transportation and warehousing.....	34,965	36,283	3.8
Utilities.....	63,772	66,144	3.7
Information.....	76,660	65,082	-15.1
Finance and insurance.....	55,010	56,232	2.2
Real estate and rental and leasing	32,482	33,649	3.6
Professional and technical services.	62,399	63,750	2.2
Management of companies and enterprises.....	64,774	69,678	7.6
Administrative and waste services...	23,336	24,173	3.6
Educational services.....	29,445	30,339	3.0
Health care and social assistance.	32,496	34,004	4.6
Arts, entertainment, and recreation..	17,669	18,529	4.9
Accommodation and food services...	12,861	13,179	2.5
Other services, except public administration.....	27,124	28,050	3.4

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI). Private industry employment excludes government workers.

² Data reflect the movement of Indian Tribal Council establishments from private industry to the public sector. Effective with 2001, federally recognized Tribal Councils and their establishments were moved into local government. See Technical Note.

³ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

⁴ Includes other industries, not shown separately.

Table 3. Average annual wages for 2001 and 2002 for all covered workers¹ in Virginia by metropolitan area

Metropolitan areas ²	Average annual wages			National ranking by level of annual average wages, 2002 ³
	2001	2002	Percent change, 2001-2002	
All U.S. metropolitan areas	\$37,908	\$38,423	1.4	---
Charlottesville, VA.....	32,427	33,328	2.8	105
Danville, VA.....	25,465	26,116	2.6	299
Johnson City-Kingsport-Bristol, TN-VA.....	28,543	29,076	1.9	222
Lynchburg, VA.....	28,859	29,444	2.0	209
Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, VA-NC.....	29,875	30,823	3.2	170
Richmond-Petersburg, VA.....	35,879	36,751	2.4	48
Roanoke, VA.....	30,330	31,775	4.8	150
Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV.....	47,589	48,430	1.8	8

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Includes data for Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas as of June 1999. See Technical Note.

³ Rankings are based on a comparison of data for 318 metropolitan areas nationwide. Data for metropolitan areas in all 50 states are included in this release.

Table 4. County rankings of employment and average annual wages for 2002 and 2001-2002 percent changes for all covered workers¹ in Virginia by largest counties

County ²	Employment		Average annual wages		
	2002	Net change 2001-2002	2002	Ranked by 2002 level	Ranked by percent change 2001-2002 ³
United States	130,376,000	-1,450,000	\$36,764	--	--
Arlington.....	153,321	-5,849	57,427	8	62
Chesterfield.....	109,033	1,312	33,668	183	179
Fairfax.....	525,041	-17,943	53,598	11	213
Henrico.....	166,041	-3,786	38,668	82	185
Loudon.....	98,870	1,783	47,761	19	315
Prince William.....	85,888	2,781	32,089	220	53
Alexandria City.....	89,808	-1,870	46,984	26	3
Chesapeake City....	84,055	105	28,761	291	62
Newport News City	93,215	625	33,053	198	307
Norfolk City.....	146,237	-177	34,769	149	53
Richmond City.....	162,223	-2,683	41,559	54	75
Virginia Beach City.	167,313	1,306	27,661	301	78

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance(UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. The 315 largest U.S. counties comprise 70.6 percent of the total covered workers in the nation. Counties in all 50 states are included.

² Includes areas not officially designated as counties. See Technical Note.

³ Rankings for percent change in annual wages are based on the 315 counties that are comparable over the year.